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ABSTRACT

One of a series of papers resulting from a Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) project to improve planning and evaluation in community colleges, this working paper is intended for use by 20 community colleges in California undergoing accreditation self-studies during 1982-83, who were asked to evaluate their performance with respect to statewide priorities and standards. Following introductory material describing the paper's background and the FIPSE project, the purposes of the working paper are delineated. Next, nine statewide priorities are presented, relating to the following concerns: (1) open admissions; (2) opportunities for individual enrollment determined by student readiness and willingness to learn; (3) instructional excellence and balance; (4) high quality, articulated transfer programs; (5) preparation for gainful employment through degree programs, short-term programs, and joint programs with business; (6) student guidance and support services; (7) remedial education; (8) continuing and community education programs; and (9) responses to local needs through community services. The next section contains guidelines for institutional evaluation with respect to each of the priorities. Next, examples are provided describing hypothetical evaluations of three statewide priorities by three districts, reflecting an approximation of real conditions and a possible analysis and problem identification process. A discussion of the Board of Governors of the California Community Colleges' role in evaluation is appended. (LAL)

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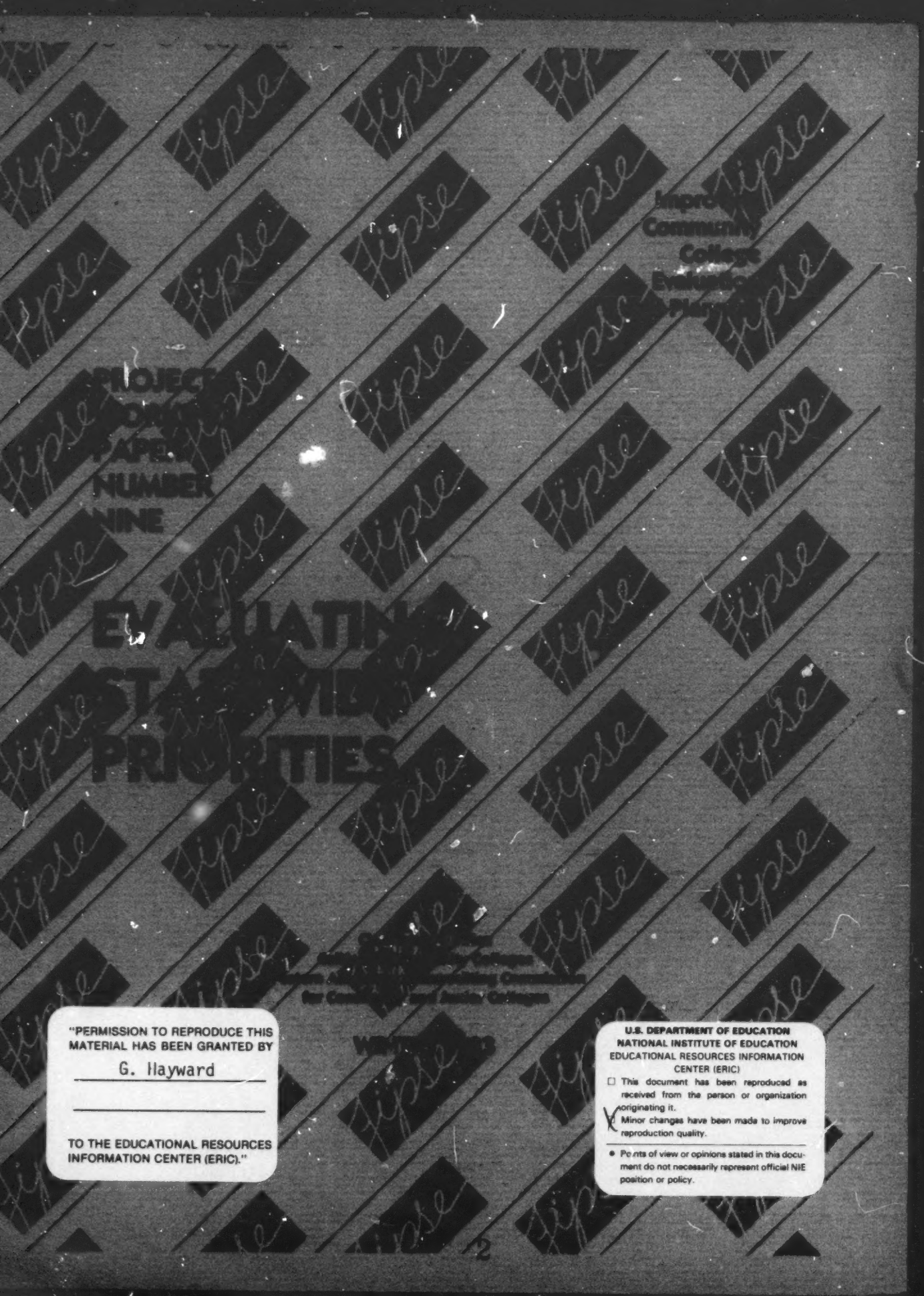
Improving
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NUMBER
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EVALUATING
STATE-WIDE
PRIORITIES
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  #8 Information System Support
  #9 Evaluating Statewide Priorities
  #10 Measuring Community College Outcomes: The State-of-the-Art

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WORKING PAPER NO. NINE

EVALUATING STATEWIDE PRIORITIES

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EVALUATING STATEWIDE PRIORITIES

PREFACE

This working paper on Evaluating Statewide Priorities is one of a series of papers resulting from a three-year project to improve evaluation and planning in community colleges. The project is sponsored jointly by the Chancellor's Office of the California Community Colleges and by the Western Association Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges. Project work is concentrated in California and Hawaii, the jurisdiction of the Western Accrediting Commission. Support for the project is provided by community colleges in these states, the two sponsoring agencies, and by the federal Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE).

Project objectives include developing a clear statement of the responsibilities for evaluation and planning that are appropriate for state control agencies, accrediting commissions, and for local community colleges. Tensions about the appropriate division of these responsibilities exist throughout the country. A long tradition of cooperation in California and Hawaii, however, has created a most congenial atmosphere in which to analyze and clarify the proper delineation of roles.

Project staff also are developing a series of tools to improve the state-of-the art of evaluation and planning for community colleges. Beginning in the Fall 1982, these tools have been introduced, used and assessed in a dozen workshops, self-study seminars, symposia, and problem-solving sessions conducted in California and Hawaii. These activities will continue through the Fall of 1984. While project work is being concentrated in the two states, it should be possible to generalize the results to virtually any community college operation or governance structure in the country.

This working paper was written earlier in the project as a guide to 20 community colleges in California who were undergoing accreditation self-studies during 1982-83. These colleges were asked, on a volunteer basis, to evaluate their performance with respect to the statewide priorities described in this paper. The priorities were derived by project staff from a statement developed by the California State Board of Governors in the Fall of 1983.

These evaluations are being reviewed by visiting teams as a separate, experimental part of the accreditation visit this year. Results of this review will be combined with other sources of data (without identifying individual colleges) to produce an aggregate accountability report for state-level purposes.

This part of the FIPSE Project is designed to test, in a practical, cost-effective way, the Project's proposed delineation of role where accreditation assesses the quality of the community college - the range, depth, and effectiveness of its programs and services, its governance, and how well it

serves students. The state agency, by contrast in this delineation, is concerned with statewide objectives and the degree to which colleges, in the aggregate, are meeting those objectives. A more general discussion of the state agency's possible role in evaluation (again using California) is contained in the Appendix to this paper.

A report on this work will be completed in June 1984. This report will include substantive results of the analysis together with an assessment of the experiment: as to whether this "bottom-up" approach to aggregate evaluation is useful.

The reader will note that we, the project staff, have other responsibilities. Consequently, were it not for the help and assistance of countless others in both Hawaii and California, this effort would be impossible. Unfortunately, space does not permit us to list all these individuals. However, we do want to thank Evelyn Stacey of the state Chancellor's Office and Rich Montori of Monterey Peninsula College for their excellent work, respectively, in typing the manuscript and in preparing the art and printing for this document.

We especially appreciate the support from FIPSE. Receipt of the Fund's grant has set in motion a series of commitments on the part of others whose support (in money and in kind) is essential to the successful completion of this project and the implementation of its results.

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PURPOSE

This working paper is intended for use by those colleges undergoing accreditation self-studies during 1982-83. These colleges and their districts are being asked, for the first time, to evaluate their efforts with respect to at least three of the statewide priorities as well as to work on the ten accrediting standards, the traditional requirements.

The paper presents the priorities, some guidelines for evaluation and several example analyses. Many different techniques of analysis are possible, depending upon the availability of staff and relevant information. Much of the evaluation of accrediting standards covers college practices that are pertinent to the priorities. This information can be incorporated by reference in the evaluation of statewide priorities, rather than being developed a second time.

It is hoped that this paper will stimulate thinking about how colleges may evaluate their status with regard to statewide priorities. Results of analyses undertaken by self-study colleges during this first, test, year will help identify the most effective evaluation techniques and provide the basis for modification of this paper. In the meantime, your comments and suggestions on this paper are welcomed.

A. PRIORITIES

1. California community colleges provide open admission opportunities to all adult California residents, without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, or prior educational status.

2. Opportunities for individual enrollments in specific courses and programs are to be determined by evaluation of student readiness and willingness to learn.

3. Community colleges should achieve instructional excellence and program balance.

4. Community college districts will provide high quality transfer programs which are carefully and continuously articulated with the senior institutions and the high schools.

5. Community colleges prepare individuals for gainful employment through the following programs:
   (a) Two-year vocational/technical programs leading to AA/AS degrees which include essential skills and general education;
   (b) short-term certificate programs leading to early employment and for continuing/reentry education; and
   (c) joint programs with business, industry, labor, and government (such as Joint Apprenticeship, CWETA, Investment in People, cooperative work experience, and contract instruction).

6. Guidance and support for students is an essential function of community colleges, including
   (a) assistance in matters of financial aid, placement, and program selection;
   (b) academic and career counseling;
   (c) monitoring students on probation;
   (d) articulation with high schools and senior institutions; and
   (e) coordination with the college's instructional programs.

7. Relevant programs of remediation should be required for all students who need preparation for successful learning in community college-level courses and programs.

8. Continuing and community education programs should effectively respond to such state and local needs as
   (a) adult basic education;
   (b) English as a second language;
   (c) general education; and
   (d) education for citizenship.

9. Community colleges should respond to unique local needs by offering the appropriate community services.

B. EVALUATION GUIDELINES

1. California community colleges provide open admission opportunities to all adult Californians without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, or prior educational status.

Evaluation of this priority begins by comparing college enrollment to the adult population of the college's service area, adjusting for the existence of other educational suppliers: (a) over time (1970 and 1980 census, for example), (b) in comparison with like colleges in California, and (c) in relation to norms determined locally by review of community educational needs.

Underrepresented groups would be identified by looking at enrollment/population ratios for specific groups, defined by location and by sociocultural, economic, and demographic (race, ethnicity, age, gender) status. Reasons for underrepresentation would be identified and analyzed.

(See example analysis.)

2. Opportunities for individual enrollments in specific courses and programs are to be determined by evaluation of student readiness and willingness to learn.

Specific strategies employed by the colleges to evaluate, counsel, advise and direct students into courses and programs should be analyzed. This includes ways colleges are improving learning opportunities for students with special needs such as the disabled, academically unprepared or less capable, and economically disadvantaged.

If the college/district needs to ration the supply of spaces in specific course or program enrollments, is this done by eliminating or closing courses, closing enrollments after a certain level, or by evaluation and screening of students prior to enrollment?

Much of the analysis of this priority is undertaken under Accrediting Standard 2C.3, dealing with student learning capabilities, and under Standard 4 which covers a variety of student services, including counseling.

3. Community colleges should achieve instructional excellence and program balance.

Instructional excellence can be evaluated largely through the standards of accreditation and by reference to measures of learner outcomes. The specific assessment of instructional excellence can be accomplished by use of Accreditation Standards 2, 3, 6, and 7, dealing with programs, staffing, learning resources, and facilities.

The notion of program balance refers to the need to match college curricula and services with the needs of individuals in a college's service area (see Accreditation Standard 1B) and with the present and future structure of local and regional labor markets. Evaluation of the college's progress toward statewide priorities must include review of local efforts to meet community needs with due recognition of other local educational suppliers. An effort should be made to assess expected future, as well as current, needs and preferences.

Any one or all of several classifications may be used to group data where instructional programs are being compared with the needs and preferences of those in the college/district's service area:

(a) by student type:
    disabled
    disadvantaged
    other;
(b) by student objective:
    transfer
    occupational
        first employment
        upgrading
        retraining and/or career change
    other; or
(c) by subject area of program:
    aggregated from TOP, CIP or other
    taxonomy.

(See example analysis.)

4. Community colleges will provide high quality transfer programs which are carefully and continuously articulated with the senior institutions and the high schools.

The quality of this program can be determined through accreditation, by reviewing the competence of staff, adequacy of the curriculum, level of counseling, and the effort by the college at articulation with high schools and senior institutions.

Specifically, transfer programs are evaluated under Standard 2A.4, articulation efforts under Standard 4A.3, and counseling under Standard 4A.6.

Quality may also be measured by the progress (i.e., intra-term, inter-term, inter-year persistence) and performance (g.p.a., cognitive and affective skills added, etc.) of students enrolled in transfer programs.

Outcomes can be measured by the rate and success on the part of those who desire to transfer both (a) over time in the college and (b) in comparison with other colleges. The rate compares those from a cohort of students who actually transfer with those from the same cohort who declare they wanted to transfer or who declared and took the needed courses (excluding those who took the wrong course pattern). Success may be measured by comparing the g.p.a.'s, time-to-degree (in upper division) and subsequent citizenship, employment or advanced education of transfer versus "native" students, adjusting for students' ability (original eligibility, for example).

(See example analysis.)

5. Community colleges prepare individuals for gainful employment through the following programs:
   (a) Two-year vocational/technical programs leading to AA/AS degrees which include essential skills and general education;
   (b) short-term certificate programs leading to early employment and for continuing/reentry education; and
   (c) joint programs with business, industry, labor, and government (such as Joint Apprenticeship, CWETA, Investment in People, cooperative work experience, and contract instruction).

Institutional and student performance can be evaluated in the same way for each of the three areas, provided that each subgroup of students is accurately identified. Such identification would be based both on student declaration, demographics, and pattern of courses taken. Once identified, students may be assessed, during enrollment, by measuring the change (from initial enrollment to completion in cognitive/effective attributes or in essential/general skills. This implies the use of standardized competency tests at entry and exit. Proxies for measuring student progress include persistence (intra- and inter-term) and performance (g.p.a., etc.).

Another assessment of program quality is accomplished by use of Accreditation Standard Nos. 2 (particularly 2A.5), 3, 4, 6, and 7 dealing with programs, staffing, support services, learning resources, and facilities. For instance, are learning resources efficiently utilized and up-to-date with current technologies?

A complete evaluation also requires follow-up study of the effects of these programs after students have completed their work. Among the relevant measures are the number and/or rate of job placements, advancements, or improved productivity among those who complete these programs. Do students work in the field for which they are trained? Also of particular interest is the relative ability of these individuals to adapt to changes in technology or in the labor market. Finally, are the general skills imparted such that students can function as responsible citizens?

6. Guidance and support for students is an essential function of community colleges, including
    (a) assistance in matters of financial aid, placement, and program selection;
    (b) academic and career counseling;
    (c) monitoring students on probation;
    (d) articulation with high schools and senior institutions; and
    (e) coordination with the college's instructional programs.

This evaluation is conducted largely under Accreditation Standard 4, particularly those components dealing with articulation, 4A.3, counseling, 4A.6, and financial aid, 4A.14. Information from the self-study can be consolidated and reworked for this evaluation.

7. Relevant programs of remediation should be required for all students who need preparation for successful learning in community college-level courses and programs.

Several questions need to be answered in this evaluation. Do such programs exist at the college? If so, are courses well-designed and well-taught? Are guidance, counseling and probation used to help students? Are programs articulated with other institutions?

Do programs serve those with deficiencies in learning skills and special learning problems, as well as those students who simply lack adequate preparation for specific courses?

Also of importance is evidence that the college has examined alternative instructional methods such as self-paced instruction and mastery learning.

Most of the analysis here is performed during accreditation, largely under Standards 2A.6 and 4A.14-18.

8. Continuing and community education programs should effectively respond to such state and local needs as
   (a) adult basic education,
   (b) English as a second language,
   (c) general education, and
   (d) education for citizenship.

Evaluation measures for this priority are analogous to those for programs preparing students for employment. A major difference, however, is the greater need here to accurately assess (a) the specific needs of the community (those within the college's service area) and (b) the existence of other local suppliers (such as K-12) of these same educational services. Another difference is the use of measures of citizenship, rather than employment, to assess learner

outcomes. Such measures include political participation, charitable and civic work, informal education of children, consumer capability, and general communication skills, among others.

Information from the self-study of Accreditation Standards 2A.5 and 5B is particularly relevant here.

9. Community colleges should respond to unique local needs by offering the appropriate community services.

Evaluation of this priority can be accomplished by summarizing the self-study information developed under Accreditation Standards 5A through 5F.

C. EXAMPLE EVALUATIONS

The following examples describe hypothetical evaluations of three statewide priorities by three districts. While hypothetical, the examples were constructed to approximate real world conditions. Each example presents a possible analysis and problem identification without attempting to present solutions.

Please review the examples with the following questions in mind.

1. Are data available for a similar analysis in your district?
2. If similar data are not available, what kind of proxy information might be used?
3. If data are available, how would an analysis of your district differ from the examples?
4. What important factors have been omitted from the evaluation?
5. What statistical or other analyses may be used for deriving conclusions of the kind shown?

EXAMPLE EVALUATIONS

Priority No. 1. California community colleges provide open enrollment opportunities to all adult Californians, without regard to race, ethnic or national origin, sex, age, disability, or prior educational status.

General

District X is an urban multi-college district with responsibility for continuing adult education in its community. Its enrollment/population (E/P) ratio in 1970 was greater than both the statewide average (expected in view of the adult education responsibility) and the average of six similarly situated districts (not necessarily expected) as shown in Figure A.

While the '70 enrollment coverage was relatively high, the trend since, particularly prior to Proposition 13 (1978), has lagged. Had the district increased its enrollment in a fashion similar to its comparison group, it would have enrolled one of every five adults or 20% of its population. This is some 15,000 students greater than the actual enrollment during Fall 1981. While the X's .12 E/P is significantly higher than the statewide E/P of .08, district policymakers conclude there has been a deterioration in their enrollment performance. Why has this occurred?

Several factors appear to account for much of the E/P drop:

(a) A stable and aging service area population; P grew by 5% between 1970 and 1980 as opposed to 15% in the comparison districts and 25% statewide,

(b) the emergence of numerous proprietary institutions in district X's service area, particularly after 1975, and

(c) development, throughout the 1970's, of programs in local adult schools.

FIGURE A

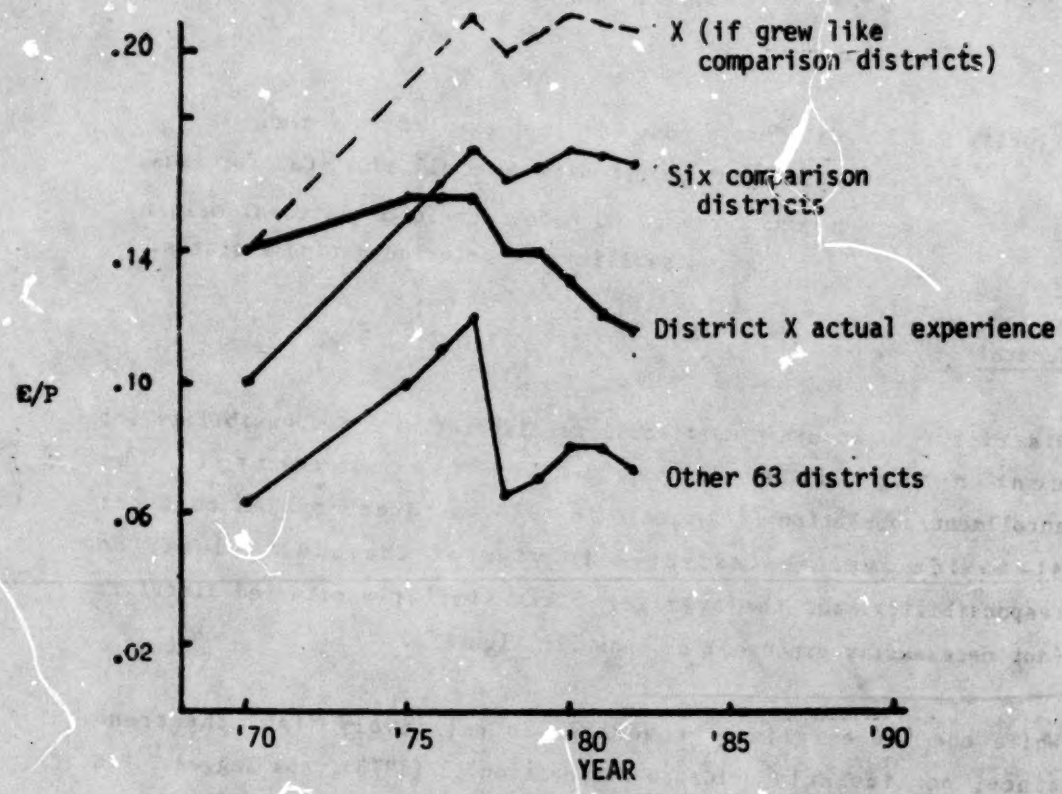
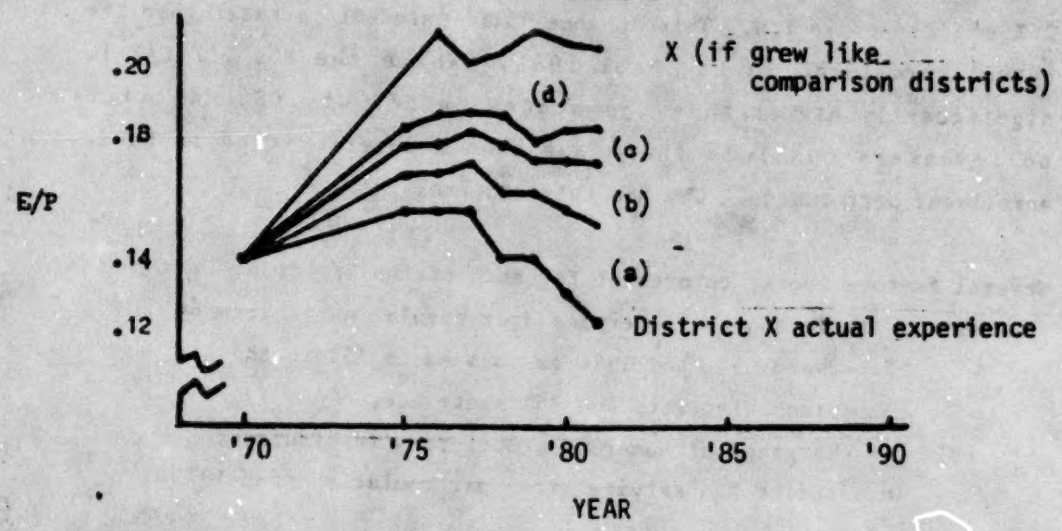


FIGURE B



Factoring out the impact of (a), (b), and (c), the district finds that there is still a significant drop in its E/P ratio relative to comparable districts as shown by area (d) in Figure B.

Further analysis reveals that this gap (d) can be explained largely by three additional factors:

(1) a decline in veterans enrollment following 1975 that was not experienced to the same degree in either the comparison districts or all other districts,
(2) a significant shift from family to single or child-less households between 1970 and 1980, and
(3) a significant influx of Indochinese refugees beginning in 1978.

Specific

A parallel analysis is made by district X of various subpopulations in its service area with the following conclusions:

(a) after large increases in the early 1970's, the district's E/P ratio among those below the poverty income level declined significantly after 1974,
(b) the E/P ratio among the district's disabled population increased dramatically since 1974,
(c) Asians and Hispanics are enrolled at a rate far below that of both "comparison" and "other" districts, and
(d) enrollment rates of blacks, caucasians, and females are comparable to those in other districts.

Needs Assessment

Consistent with Accreditation Standard 1B.1, district X conducts an educational needs assessment of those in its service area. The resulting distribution of instructional programs and support services preferred ("needed") is then contrasted with the distribution of

programs and services offered by district X, adjusting apparent discrepancies by the existance of other local educational suppliers.

In summary, district X offers relatively less ESL, remediation and courses for the elderly than are preferred by its clientele. Unmet financial need appears large. Upon further analysis, it is shown that district X provides relatively fewer EOPS services to its EOPS eligibles and maintains a far smaller financial aid staff than is the case in the six "comparable" districts or in another set of ten districts with comparable proportions of their clientele below poverty. Certain of these programmatic "gaps" appear related to factors noted in the enrollment analysis.

(A more specific and detailed comparison of district X's programs and services with the programs and services needed by its clientele is performed for the statewide priority that deals with "program balance." In that case, other data on local labor market structure are also analyzed.)

Projections

Relying on extrapolation of recent demographic trends, local planning agency projections, and reasonable assumptions about future local economic development, growth in nearby suburbs, and refugee immigration, district X concludes that

(a) total district population will decline and age until 1988 after which these trends will be reversed,

(b) the trend toward single and child-less households will continue throughout the 1980's,

(c) future economic growth will take place in certain highly technical industries and will, by 1990, require skills not now in existence, and

(d) refugees will comprise an ever-increasing proportion of district population.

It is likely that, absent significant policy changes, the relative (and absolute) decline in district X's E/P ratio will continue for another five years then level somewhat.

Priority No. 3. Community colleges should achieve instructional excellence and program balance

District Z is a relatively small, older college in the inner city. District population is stable and unemployment has increased significantly during the past three years.

Instructional Excellence

An assessment of program quality is accomplished through Accreditation Standards 2, 3, 6 and 7, dealing with educational programs, staffing, learning resources, and facilities. Questions are raised concerning relatively large class sizes in many of Z's occupational labs and shops, small class sizes in second-year courses leading to transfer, and a relatively large proportion of equipment that is obsolete and not well maintained. Many of these observations are derived following initial comparisons of Z's programs with those of six similar small-to-moderately sized inner city colleges.

Program Balance

Further analysis is made of the results of an extensive survey of professed community educational needs along with a review of the local and regional labor market structure. A distribution of preferred programs is then developed and contrasted with a distribution of the instructional programs offered by Z (see Figure C).

Relative to the apparent need, district Z has allocated too few resources (as measured by faculty course assignments) in six of eight occupational areas, the natural sciences and adult basic skills. At the same time, it appears that too many district resources may have been allocated to social science, humanities and fine arts, and distributive (occupational) education.

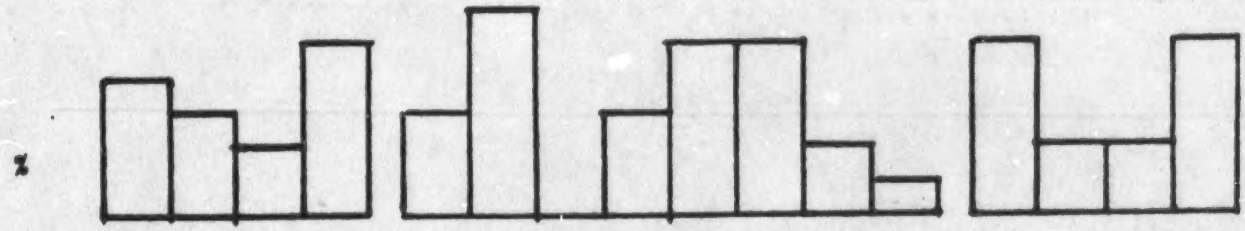
Further analysis reveals the existence in the district of a number of proprietary institutions offering programs in the occupational programs of justice and business. Consequently, Z appears deficient

FIGURE C

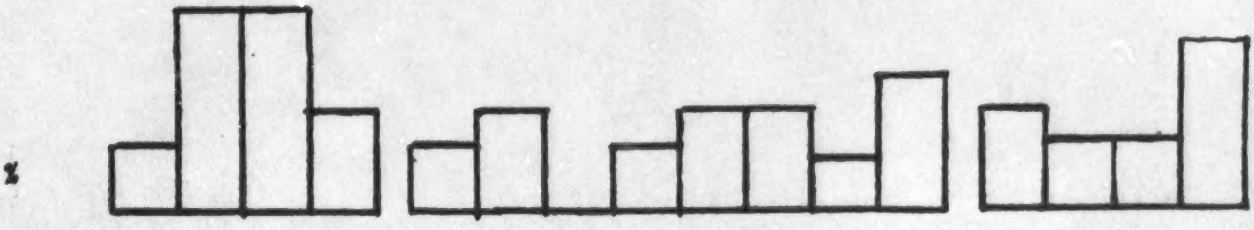
PROGRAM

Health Science
Social Science
Humanities, Fine Arts
Other Gen.Educ.
Justice
Business
Agriculture
Health
Technologies
Trade & Industry
Consumer, Home Economics
Distributive
ABE
ESL
Citizenship
Other

DISTRICT Z COMMUNITY PREFERENCES



DISTRICT Z FACULTY COURSE LOAD



CLASS SIZE:	35	20	15	26	25	23	-	35	30	30	25	22	25	20	20	18
Stw:	27	30	25	24	25	23	20	27	25	20	22	26	20	20	20	18

only in health, technology, trade and industry, and consumer/home economics.

It is also noted that in those programs where Z appears to have allocated relatively few resources, Z's class sizes exceed those experienced in community colleges elsewhere. Likewise, for "over-allocated" programs, Z's class sizes are less than those of similar programs elsewhere.

Further review is undertaken by district Z of accreditation findings bearing upon those programs that appear most "out-of-balance." Program strengths and weaknesses uncovered by the use of accreditation standards tend to parallel the analysis of balance. That is, relatively more weaknesses are uncovered in those programs in which the faculty allocation is relatively low and in which class sizes are relatively high.

Priority No. 4. Community college districts will provide transfer programs of high quality which are carefully and continuously articulated with the senior institutions and the high schools.

District Y is a middle-sized (14,000 enrollment) district in an older suburban setting that has already experienced its major population growth.

Rate

Review reveals that, like other areas of the state, the district's number of annual transfers to UC and CSU have declined since 1976. This decline is modified to a degree by an increasing proportion of Y's transfer students going to private and out-of-state senior institutions. (Data here are limited to just three years, however.) Like other areas of the state, Y's 18 to 24 year-old age cohort has decreased since 1978 (see Figure D).

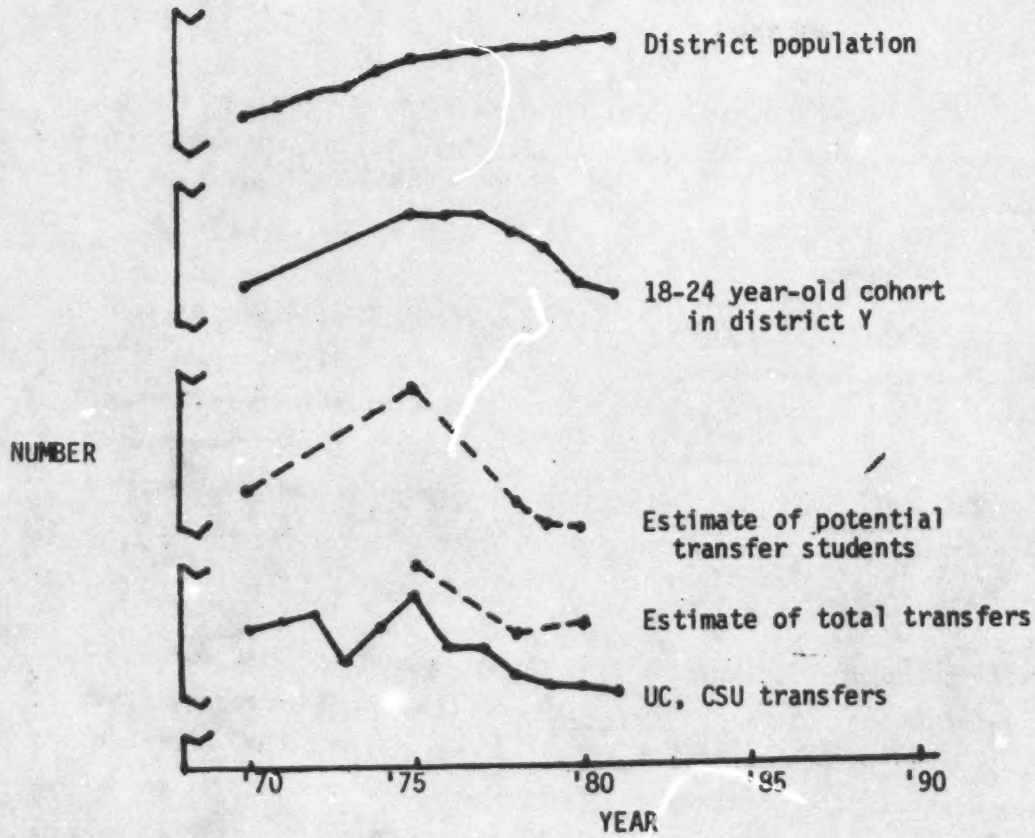
Using the Statewide Longitudinal Study, annual district surveys of student objectives, numbers of full-time students, and other indicators/evidence, the district estimates that the number of students enrolled in the transfer program increased to 1975 and has since decreased to a level slightly below that of 1970.

Comparing the estimated numbers of actual transfers to those enrolled, the district finds that the rate of transfer from among those enrolled for this purpose decreased between 1970 and 1975 and has since increased to a level greater than that of any year during the 1970's.

Similar data from a set of ten comparable suburban districts are not available, but a casual review suggests that their experience since 1975 has been lower than that of District Y.

Further study of a limited amount of longitudinal data, however, reveals significant instability in the group enrolled for transfer.

FIGURE D


District population
18-24 year-old cohort in district Y
NUMBER
Estimate of potential transfer students
Estimate of total transfers
UC, CSU transfers
'70
'75
'80
'85
'90
YEAR

That is, fewer than 30% of the transfer group persists beyond their first year, a level that is significantly below estimates of the like rate statewide and in the ten comparable districts. Further, those who do transfer spent an average of three years in lower division at Y. This exceeds similar time-to-completion rates elsewhere by one-half year.

The results appear ambiguous. The relatively low inter-term (and possibly intra-term) rates of students progress suggest that the transfer/enrollment rate may overstate district Y's performance. Further research is needed, but, in any case, the data on student progress are important to program evaluation, the topic of Accrediting Standard No. 2A.4.

Success

District Y has close contact with those UC and CSU campuses to which Y's students typically transfer. Little is known about other four-year schools to which Y's students transfer.

Attempts to secure data on Y's transfer students at UC and CSU are relatively successful. Efforts to obtain comparable data on transfers from the ten comparable districts are less successful.

Analysis shows that, on the average, Y's students experience a g.p.a. drop of 0.5 point during their first term after transfer to UC. By graduation, however, Y's transfers have improved their g.p.a. by about one point to a level that exceeds the average g.p.a. of native students. The average time-to-completion and the rate of completion of bachelor's degrees on the part of Y's transfers, are significantly below that of native students, however.

Review of Y's transfers to CSU reveals even higher (than UC) comparative results on g.p.a. (compared to natives), but similar results with respect to time-to-completion of bachelors' degrees; that is, Y's transfers at CSU take significantly longer to complete upper

division than do CSU native students.

Efforts were partially successful in separating and analyzing those who were originally eligible (for CSU or UC out of high school) in contrast to those who were not eligible. Notably, Y's transfers appear to be made up of a much greater proportion of "originally-eligibles" than is suggested for community colleges generally from the few studies available on this topic. The higher-than-average g.p.a. rates of Y's transfers in upper division appear to be partly related to this phenomenon.

Programs

District Y's efforts at articulating transfer programs with other institutions are assessed in Accreditation Standard 4A.3. Other support services, such as counseling and guidance, are reviewed in other components of Standard 4 and in relation to the statewide priority dealing with student support services.

These analyses reveal a number of areas where improvements could be made in both the articulation and counseling functions. In several cases these findings appear to relate to the findings on transfer student success (noted above).

Board of Governors of the
California Community Colleges
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Title: Board of Governors' Role in Evaluation

Staff Presentation: Chuck McIntyre, Director
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Item

Summary

This is an information item designed to help the Board begin discussion of its role in evaluation. Current efforts to evaluate the performance of California community colleges range from state-level review by the Chancellor's Office on behalf of the Board to work by the colleges on internal evaluation of programs, activities and staff. Of major importance is the evaluation of colleges that is conducted through accreditation.

Recognition of the need to explicitly define the roles of accreditation and the Board of Governors in evaluating the work of the community colleges led to the project supported by the federal Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). Work of the FIPSE project should help the Board determine how its evaluation activities are distinct from accreditation and how the Board's activities can support the Board's responsibilities for leadership and advocacy for community colleges.

Background

The Board of Governors is responsible for leadership, advocacy, and regulation of California community colleges. These responsiblities involve a continuous series of decisions about public policy. While districts and colleges are responsible for the essential functions of teaching and community services, the Board works to protect the rights of citizens and to oversee the use of public funds.

Board decisions typically involve identifying statewide educational needs, assessing how well these needs can and are being met by community colleges, and what policies can contribute to improvements in the way colleges meet these needs. This assessment invariably raises questions about the Board's role in evaluation. While community colleges have a long tradition of local autonomy and responsibility, there have been increasing pressures for greater accountability most often focused at the state level and on the Board, particularly since the passage of Proposition 13.

The Board's continuing interest in improving accountability was highlighted in its 1979 resolve to undertake a series of steps that would result in more effective planning and compliance. More effective planning is being sought through work by the Board and staff on Comprehensive Planning (see item elsewhere in this agenda). Compliance is being improved through actions which have simplified provisions of the Education Code and Title 5 of the Administrative Code and, most recently, in a comprehensive review by the Board of minimum standards entitling districts to receive state aid. During one of these Board deliberations on minimum standards, a number of concerns were raised about accreditation.

The importance of accreditation and the need to coordinate this activity and the work of the Board of Governors gave rise to the FIPSE project. The project is designed to generally improve community college evaluation and planning. A major specific objective of the project is to delineate the respective roles that the Board, the Accreditation Commission for Community and Junior Colleges,, and the districts and colleges are to play in evaluation. As work proceeds, care is being taken to distinguish clearly between evaluation and compliance.

Compliance has to do with the community colleges meeting certain minimum conditions for the conduct of their operations and in their use of public funds. If these minimum conditions are not met, sanctions are introduced to ensure that compliance is forthcoming. Evaluation, by contrast, deals with the quality of community college efforts to achieve goals and objectives that are, for the most part, substantially higher than the minimum conditions associated with compliance. If goals and objectives are not being met, new or changes to existing policies are recommended which will aid and encourage their achievement. Evaluation includes not only assessment of existing performance but also identification of ways to improve that performance.

Definition

Evaluation has been described by Paul Dressel as "...both a judgment on the worth or impact of a program, procedure, or individual, and the process whereby that judgment is made." The term evaluation can be used to describe the activity, its end product, or both.

The activity of evaluation can be accomplished in a variety of ways, ranging from an extensive, very rigorous analysis to a very cursory, subjective consideration. These respective approaches are sometimes distinguished by the terms "hard" evaluation versus "soft" evaluation. In hard evaluation, analysts attempt to identify causal relationships between inputs and outputs. This kind of work typically involves subjecting objective data to sophisticated statistical analysis. By contrast, efforts in soft evaluation are aimed at identifying correlational, rather than causal, relationships, and are based very often on subjective data without resort to heavy statistical analyses.

Evaluation also may be categorized as "formative" or "summative". In formative evaluation, the analyst often works closely with the program manager or policymaker while the program or policy is being implemented. In this way, results of the evaluation can be translated quickly into improvements in the effort prior to its completion. By contrast, summative evaluation focuses on the end product or outcomes of an activity and may take place after the activity is completed. In this case, the evaluator is an objective observer of the activity, rather than being a participant in its conduct. In practice, however, these distinctions are blurred, since even most summative evaluations are undertaken for the explicit purpose of improving policies or programs at some point prior to their completion.

For most evaluations, it is accepted practice to identify and attribute values to the goals and/or objectives of the activity under scrutiny. The analysis then proceeds so as to determine the extent to which the activity is achieving these values. An alternative (though a less frequently used) technique is "goal-free evaluation," which looks at actual outcomes of the activity without regard to the intended outcomes. Here, unintended or side effects of the activity become an implicit part of the analysis. In practice, evaluations which are goal- or objective-based, should incorporate side effects if they are to fully measure the consequences of the activity being examined.

In normal use, the term goal refers to values that are typically global descriptions of ends that are not constrained by time. By contrast, objectives are specific, usually measureable, to be achieved by a certain time, and descriptive either of means or ends or both. In practice, analysts settle for values that fall somewhere between goals and objectives. Use of the term "priorities" in the Board statement developed this past fall seems to be a compromise of this sort.

Existing Evaluation

Responsibility for the evaluation of student performance, the effectiveness of courses, programs and services, and the work of staff resides at the district and college level. Evaluation of the institution or college is the responsibility of the regional accreditating agency. For California community colleges, this agency is the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior colleges, a part of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WASC). Certain programs also are examined through specialized accreditation by professional accrediting bodies and by the Board and Chancellor's Office in the case of those programs that are categorically funded by the state. The Board and other state bodies conduct sporadic analyses of how well the colleges are performing as a group.

As always, evaluation of student learning is the responsibility of faculty assigned to the classroom. There are, however, efforts underway that are aimed at improving the assessment of students that takes place outside the classroom. Among such efforts are the highly publicized "Miami Dade model" and the implementation, in New Jersey, of state-mandated assessment and placement testing in community colleges. In California, work by the Learning Assessment and Retention Consortium (LARC) is directed toward preparing models that can be used by colleges to assess the readiness of students for particular courses. In addition, LARC is working on alternative ways for colleges to conduct and evaluate remedial programs and courses. Another aspect of the work by LARCs is a followup mechanism to evaluate changes in the retention and performance of students. Work by the Chancellor's Task Force on Academic Quality may also consider student assessment techniques.

Most districts and colleges conduct program evaluations which result in the modification or elimination of existing courses. These evaluations typically involve an extensive analsysis of program costs and the revenue forthcoming to individual programs through the apportionment process. Less often, these evaluations are extended to look at enrollment trends that are anticipated in individual programs. Only rarely do these evaluations include efforts to assess the quality of programs.

While accreditation is focused on the instituition, not on individual programs, the self-study does determine if program review is taking place and how well it is carried out. The focus of accreditation is best described by its two fundamental purposes:

(a) to assure the quality of the institution and
(b) to assist in the improvement of the institution.

All regional accrediting bodies, including the Western Commission, use a common process. This process involves first a self-study of the institution, using Commission standards, by staff at that institution. This self-study is followed by the on-site visit by a team of peers in order to validate findings of the self-study and to make recommendations for improvement. The team's report, including recommendations as to the college's accreditation, is reviewed by the Commission and a final decision rendered.

The college is accredited by the Commission which certifies that the institution (a) has appropriate purposes, (b) has the necessary resources, (c) is accomplishing its purposes, and (d) will continue to do so.

The Accrediting Commission encourages colleges to make public both the self-studies and the evaluation of team reports after the Commission has taken action. However, disclosure of the content of the reports is a decision that, by policy, belongs to the institution being accredited.

Accreditation is a prerequisite for the college to receive public funds and for its students to receive federal financial aid. Because of the quasi-public nature of accreditation, public members sit on the Commission. Commission policy meetings are open to the public. Actions on both standards and on accreditation for individual colleges are made public. At the same time, the voluntary, self-regulatory nature of the process is the basis for a measure of confidentiality. Institutions make full disclosure to the Commission which, in turn, keeps the information confidential. Some of this information is quite sensitive, particularly if it involves college personnel. In any case, full

disclosure of both self-studies and team reports would reduce their candor. This candor is a major basis for efforts at improving the institution.

Increasingly, there is an effort to focus the accreditation self-study on outcomes, rather than on inputs or process as has been the case traditionally. This emphasis can be seen in the new standards being used by the Commission for community colleges in California, Hawaii, and the Pacific Basin. Under these standards, colleges conducting self-studies are encouraged to examine critically their performance in the areas of college goals, educational programs, staff, student services, community services, learning resources, physical facilities, financial resources, governance and administration, and district and college relationships. Experience to date with the new standards suggests that their use results in a more structured and more rigorous self-study.

The Commission works on a five-year cycle. Consequently, a community college is subject to review at least once every five years if its performance is satisfactory and more often if there are difficulties or changes requiring followup visits. Costs for the Commission and the expenses of visiting teams are estimated at nearly $200,000 each year for about 25 to 30 college accreditations. The cost of college staff time involved in the visits and, more importantly, in the self-study add to this cost.

Staff of the Chancellor's Office participate on each of the accrediting site teams and on the Commission itself. In addition to that, the Office performs evaluations of the three major categorically funded programs:

(a) Extended Opportunity Programs and Services (EOPS),
(b) Handicapped Students Programs and Services (HSPS), and
(c) Vocational Education Act activities (VEA)

as well as the evaluation of projects submitted under the provisions of the State Fund for Improvement of Instruction.

For EOPS, data on student enrollment and activity and program expenditures are analyzed to determine if college programs are meeting the needs of students and if the programs are efficiently managed. In addition, operational program reviews are scheduled for two to four-day periods throughout the academic year to provide formative information to EOPS administrators and to assist in the systemwide analysis of EOPS. Review teams address three questions:

(a) What has the program accomplished?
(b) What are the characteristics of EOPS students?
(c) How do program activities compare with the program plan?

These reviews are for the purpose of program improvement rather than being vehicles for determining compliance. A similar format is being developed for the evaluation of handicapped programs.

VEA activities are evaluated by Chancellor's Office staff largely through two vehicles: the Community College Occupational Program Evaluation System (COPES) and the collection of information on students after they complete or leave a program, generally termed "followup," which is required by the vocational education data system (VEDS).

COPES relies on the use of some 40 indicators of program quality. Using these indicators, college staff and students are asked to record their perception of how well the college is doing. Responses are processed and provided to a visiting team of peers who validate the results (somewhat like accreditation).

Beyond these activities, Chancellor's Office staff perform a number of other activities, such as reviewing facilities utilization, which could be considered as evaluation. Aside from various ad hoc analyses, such as the various studies involving transfer students, however, there is no framework for consistent and comprehensive evaluation of the performance of the colleges as a group. For instance, there is no Chancellor's Office evaluation of the vast arry of nonoccupational programs that make up over half of the course activity in community colleges. Nor is there any consistent evaluation of student support services by the Chancellor's Office.

Each year, the Chancellor's Office reviews annual information submitted in contracted district audit reports. These reports deal with the use of public funds and are matters of compliance. There is no assessment of the current or projected future fiscal status of districts in a fashion that might parallel the evaluation of district fiscal capability that takes place during accreditation. Some fiscal evaluation, however, does take place under the rubric of school finance legislation or such efforts as the Board's Long Term Finance Plan.

In much the same ad hoc fashion, other agencies of the state, such as the Postsecondary Education Commission (CPEC) engage in evaluations of broad aspects of community college operations. On-going work on the status of the transfer function and the recent work on remedial programs are just two examples of CPEC evaluation.

Aside from VEA support, most federal investment in community college education comes by way of the financial aid appropriated for students. Consequently, federal concerns about evaluation have to do largely with the reliability of accreditation as a vehicle for determining the eligibility of an institution and its students to receive aid.

Current and Proposed Activities

The high cost of effective evaluation, gaps in accountability by community colleges as a group for use of public funds, the desire for a strengthened accreditation process, and a good deal of apparent duplication in the information required by accreditation and by the Chancellor's Office, among other factors, resulted in the FIPSE project.

The FIPSE project proposal called for an explicit delineation of the roles to be played by the state agency (Board and Chancellor's Office) and Accrediting Commission in the evaluation of community colleges. Some of the general differences between these two bodies are:

(a) The focus of regional accrediting commissions is on the institution, while the focus of the state agency is on statewide objectives and accountability for the expenditure of public funds.
(b) Accrediting commissions are private, voluntary, non-governmental associations of institutions which formulate and subscribe to certain standards. State agencies are responsible for implementing the substance and intent of the public laws under which institutions may operate.
(c) Regional accrediting commissions are concerned, in reviewing a new program, with the program's relationship to the institution's mission, whether the institution has the resources and pro-

cesses to initiate, monitor, and maintain the program, and whether the program is of acceptable quality. States have an additional concern - the need for the program in terms of statewide objectives and the availability of existing programs.

(d) Regional accrediting commissions have quite similar policies and procedures, whereas the 50 state agencies vary widely in their methods and degrees of regulation.

Drawing from such differences in interest and function between the Board of Governors and the Accrediting Commission, the FIPSE project suggested a broad working delineation in which the accrediting agency, in general, should assess the internal efficiency of a community college: the range, depth, and quality of its instructional programs and services, its management, and how well it serves its students and community. The state agency, then, should concern itself with external or statewide objectives and the extent to which the colleges as a group meet those objectives. It is this structure that is being examined in the FIPSE project.

This general delineation of roles, if appropriate, needs to be detailed, made explicit, and made operational.

Besides developing a draft delineation for future consideration by the Board and Accrediting Commission, staff will continue work on the experiment in which the Board's statement of Mission and Statewide Priorities is being tested for its use in evaluation. In this experiment, colleges undergoing accredition self-studies this year have been asked also to voluntarily review at least three of the statewide priorities in addition to the work normally required in the self-study. (The guidelines for this review are described in FIPSE Project Working Paper No. 9.)

Information developed in this experiment can be aggregated (without identifying individual colleges) with a focus toward the priorities. Other information can also be brought to bear from the Chancellor's Office Information System, from ad hoc studies and from other sources so as to put together a comprehensive evaluation that focuses on how well the community colleges as a group are performing with respect to the statewide priorities.

If the experiment is successful, this approach will be recommended as a central, on-going component of the Board's role in evaluation.

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